

HAMILTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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SALVAGING FLOOD DAMAGED FOOD IN THE HOME

As a result of flooded conditions in homes, large quantities of foodstuffs may be submerged in flood water or sewerage backflow. While efforts may be made to salvage certain of these foods which have been contaminated, many items cannot be safely salvaged and should be destroyed. The following precautions are offered as a guide in the salvaging of flood-contaminated foods and containers.

1. Food in Tin Cans. Remove labels. Thoroughly wash in soapy water by scrubbing with a brush. Immerse containers in strong chlorine solution for 15 minutes. Make the solution by adding an ounce of chlorine-type laundry bleach to a gallon of clean water. Dry containers thoroughly to prevent rusting.
2. Bottled Foods. (Carbonated beverages, milk, catsup, olives, and similar foods.) These foods will usually contain contaminated water if submerged. Even if contaminated water has not entered the containers, they cannot be safely cleaned because all filth cannot be removed from under the edge of the closure. Such foods should be destroyed.
3. Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. Do not salvage. Destroy. Note--foods listed in this and Items 4, 5, 6, and 7, are easily contaminated and may contain dangerous disease causing organisms.
4. Meats, Poultry, Fish. Do not salvage. Destroy. Note—this does not apply to canned meats, fish, and poultry, which may be salvaged as any other canned food (#1 above).
5. Lard, Butter, Oleo. Do not salvage. Destroy. Fats in undamaged hermetically sealed cans may be salvaged as outlined in “canned food” instructions (#1 above).
6. Sugar, Coffee, Tea, Eggs. Do not salvage. Destroy. If these foods are in hermetically sealed cans, they may be salvaged as outlined in “canned food” instructions (#1 above).
7. Cereals, Flour, Corn Meal, Etc. Do not salvage. Destroy.

As a general rule, food should not be salvaged unless it is in a container that protects it and is one which can be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water and sterilized with boiling water or chlorine. Since paper, cardboard, wood, and most plastic food

containers are not waterproof; foods in such containers, which have been under flood water, should be destroyed.